

Home Care After Your Cardiac Catheterization

Going Home

If you go home the same day or the day after your heart catheterization, you must have someone drive you home. You should not drive, use machinery, or drink alcoholic beverages for 24 hours after your catheterization because of the medications you were given.

If you return home the same day, ask a family member or friend to stay with you for the first 12 hours in case you need some help.

Activity

The First 24 Hours

When you cough, sneeze, laugh, or do anything that uses your stomach muscles, put firm pressure over your puncture site.

Stay off your feet as much as possible. This helps the puncture site heal.

Get up slowly from a sitting or lying position. This helps prevent lightheadedness.

Do not sit upright or ride in a car for longer than one hour without standing or moving. Recline if at all possible.

The First 48 Hours

Avoid doing anything that requires bending the leg or puts direct pressure on or could injure the puncture site (swimming, jogging, biking, contact sports).

Do not lift anything that weighs more than 15 pounds for 10 days to two weeks.

Site Care

Keep the site covered with a bandaid for 24 hours.

Shower, do not bathe, during the first 48 hours. Wash the puncture site gently with soap and water.

You may have a bruise at your puncture site. It is normal for the skin to turn yellowish as it heals.

It is normal to have a small pea-sized lump at the puncture site. It may take two to three weeks for it to go away.

A non-prescription pain medication, such as Tylenol, and/or mild heat may relieve discomfort at the puncture site.

Problems

Watch for these problems during the first 24 hours:

- **At the puncture site:**
- the lump gets larger
- fresh bleeding (*if you have bleeding or sudden pain lie down and have someone put pressure one inch above the puncture site for 15 minutes*)
- bruising that increases in size, along with swelling (especially if the bruise spreads to mid thigh)
- pain or discharge, along with a temperature higher than 100° (a small amount of discharge is normal for the first 24 hours but it should not last longer)

Other

- a numb leg or foot, tingling, pain, or color change (to white or blue) below the puncture site
- chest pain or shortness of breath.

Call for help if you have any of these problems.

Numbers To Call For Help

Monday through Friday

Between 7:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., call the Cardiac Cath Lab at (612) 467-3662.

After Hours, Weekends, Holidays

Call Urgent Care at (612) 467-2771. Explain your problem and you will be connected to the medical doctor on call.

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Content approval: Cardiology Section

September 1997
Revised September 1999
Reviewed May 2001, May 2003, July 2005
VA Medical Center – Minneapolis, Minnesota